



PREFACE

Indiana K-6 Reading Framework

The Indiana K–6 Reading Framework will serve educators throughout the state as a road map for effective instruction for all Indiana students. The purpose of this framework is to ensure all students are proficient readers by the end of grade 3 and that they progress along a positive trajectory in order to remain at or above grade level each year throughout their school careers. To reach this goal, the implementation of this framework requires concerted efforts and collaboration among the State Education Agency (SEA), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and schools.

Reading is the foundation for learning and meaningfully pursuing goals and aspirations. Educators must ensure all students acquire sufficient knowledge and skills to lead productive and fulfilling lives. Young people should be prepared for postsecondary education, meaningful employment, lifelong learning, and citizenship. While the range of skills referred to by the term *literacy* is vast, this framework focuses on the most fundamental aspect - reading.

The Need for a K–6 Reading Framework: Why Reading Skills Matter

In the past decade, significant research has informed the education community's understanding of how best to teach reading, particularly in the primary grades. Based on the National Reading Panel Report (2000) and findings from Reading First, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) published its position on teaching reading, recognizing the connection between early reading skills and later school success.

Reading is the fundamental skill upon which all formal education depends. Research clearly shows that children who are poor readers at the end of first grade are never likely to acquire the reading skills they need to successfully

*complete elementary school—unless these students are identified early in their school career and given the intensive, systematic intervention they require. Any child who doesn't learn to read early and well will not easily master other skills and knowledge, and is unlikely to ever flourish in school or in life.*¹

In addition to focusing on early literacy, recent reports have started to examine the literacy needs of older students (grades 4–12) and the direct link between literacy and economic success.

*Neglecting students' literacy has serious economic consequences for individuals and states. Today, almost 40 percent of high school graduates lack the reading and writing skills that employers seek, and almost a third of high school graduates who enroll in college require remediation. Deficits in basic skills cost the nation's businesses, universities, and underprepared high school graduates as much as \$16 billion annually in lost productivity and remedial costs.*²

Learning is cumulative. What students learn in each grade directly impacts their knowledge and skill development in later grades. Every educator is responsible for the academic achievement and growth of all students. This framework provides guidance to ensure that instruction is aligned, focused, and coherent throughout the grades.

Indiana's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Tony Bennett, has set a rigorous goal for educators and students: "The academic achievement and career preparation of all Indiana students will be the best in the United States and on par with the most competitive countries in the world." More specifically, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is driven to ensure that 90% of students pass ISTEP+ exams. Thoroughly understanding the importance of literacy, the IDOE strives to institute and sustain an emphasis on reading at the

¹ American Federation of Teachers, 2008

² National Governors Association, 2005

elementary level and integrate reading and writing into all content areas to ensure students are able to comprehend and to apply new knowledge across the curriculum and in practical settings. Ultimately, leaders and educators must ask the following question: *How well are we preparing our students for rewarding postsecondary opportunities?*

Our data presents a mixed answer to this question. In some areas we see pockets of excellence, but in others we find dismal results. Preparing all students to thrive in the twenty-first century requires substantial educational improvements throughout the state. The foundation for academic improvement is stronger reading abilities, and that means stronger reading instruction. Until all Indiana students acquire the sophisticated reading skills they need to be prepared for college and careers, reading must become and remain a high priority for every school.

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The Indiana K–6 Reading Framework provides clear direction to districts and schools to design and implement research- and evidence-based practices for improving reading and increasing student achievement. The focus on reading does not suggest that speaking and listening, language, and writing effectively are not also critical skills. Because reading and writing are interrelated skills, improvement in one area positively affects the other. While students should have multiple reading and writing opportunities throughout the school day, times for direct, explicit instruction in these areas should be reserved. The Indiana K-6 Reading Framework’s components provide expert guidance on providing excellent instruction.

The Components of the Indiana K-6 Reading Framework

For all of Indiana's students to develop the reading skills they need to do well in school, in postsecondary education, and/or in careers, a concerted and coordinated effort will be needed at every level.



The framework is organized around six components:

1. Reading Goals
2. Instruction
3. Assessment
4. Leadership
5. Professional Development
6. Commitment

Reading *goals* that are measurable serve as the glue that binds together all the other components. Clear goals are necessary to drive instruction and to determine appropriate assessments. Undergirding the goals are *instruction* and *assessment*. The former focuses on the methods and pedagogy for teaching the skills and knowledge needed to reach the goals and to stay on track, while the latter serves as the gauge to determine the extent to which students have met the goals. In order to implement an assessment system and high-quality, research-based instruction well, an organized support system is vital; *leadership* and *professional development* are the core of this support. Finally, without a clearly articulated *commitment* to provide excellent instruction, establish and maintain an assessment system, demonstrate the necessary leadership, and ensure ongoing and adequate professional development, achieving the state's ambitious goals will remain a dream rather than become a reality.

Component 1: Reading Goals

The overall goal for all Indiana schools should be to guarantee that every student reads at grade level by the end of each academic year. This goal is ultimately measured by student performance on summative assessments, IREAD and ISTEP+. Formative reading goals for students in grades K–3 will help determine whether or not students are on track to meet the IREAD and ISTEP+ grade-level expectations.

Component 2: Instruction

The National Research Council's major consensus report (1998) found that the most efficient way to prevent early reading failure is to ensure that all children receive appropriate *high-quality reading instruction* in grades K–3.³ The Report of the National Reading Panel in 2000 verified the findings in the earlier report.⁴ In addition, students who fall behind and are at risk of reading failure will need extra and more intensive instruction to get them on track and remain at grade level.⁵

Component 3: Assessment

Instruction must meet each student's needs. Teachers must have access to and know how to use valid and reliable reading assessments to inform instruction. Each school must provide a comprehensive assessment system, including (a) screening measures to identify students at risk of failure, (b) diagnostic assessments to identify specific deficiencies, (c) progress-monitoring tools to determine if students are on track, and (d) summative assessments to identify whether or not students have met grade-level expectations. Information gleaned from these assessments will drive instruction, inform small-group differentiation, and identify intervention and extension needs.

³ Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998

⁴ National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000

⁵ Torgesen, 2004

Component 4: Leadership

A review of successful Reading First schools identified strong leadership as a necessary and common characteristic of effective schools.⁶ Strong leadership in these schools was defined by extensive knowledge of children, reading programs, scheduling, data, and teacher needs. Site leadership does not function in a vacuum, however. A coordinated and congruent effort is needed at the state and district levels to support school implementation of this framework and to ensure that schools and their leaders are equipped with the knowledge, skills, materials, and professional development necessary to be successful. The state and district leadership roles are included within the State and District Actions Charts. At the school level, the building leadership is responsible for collecting and analyzing student assessment data to determine if students are on track and whether teachers need additional support and professional development. Based on the data from ongoing classroom walk-throughs, school leadership is responsible for garnering the necessary materials and training to assist teachers with consistently delivering high-quality, scientifically-based reading instruction. An effective school leadership model includes distributed responsibilities among the principal, the Reading Leadership Team, and grade-level teams. Each section of this framework begins with list of actions necessary to implement that section, a School Action Checklist.

Component 5: Professional Development

Professional development is the vehicle to provide teachers with the support, knowledge, and skills they need to provide effective, high-quality instruction in the classroom. Teacher quality, and the extent to which educators receive training and ongoing support, makes a significant difference in student achievement. Darling-Hammond found that the quality of the teacher is the most important predictor of student success.⁷ A Tennessee study

Strong professional development goes beyond single-session workshops to repeated exposures in which new teaching behaviors are learned over time in the classroom.

⁶ Torgesen & Crawford, 2006

⁷ Darling-Hammond, 1998

discovered that when low-achieving students were taught by a highly effective teacher, achievement improved by as much as 53%.⁸ Additionally, a study by Cohen and Hill found that if professional development focused directly on the curriculum educators were teaching, they embraced effective practices and their students showed achievement gains.⁹

Leaders at all levels (school, district, and state) have a role to play in providing differentiated professional development that is ongoing and includes classroom follow-up. Two types of professional development are important:

- Effective teaching principles, strategies, and practices with follow-up coaching
- Program-specific professional development that equips teachers to masterfully implement their curriculum¹⁰

Professional development should target classroom instruction that will enable students to meet grade-level reading goals. Just as students may need differentiated instruction, professional development should be based on identified needs. This is true for teachers, administrators, and coaches, who will all benefit from ongoing professional development.

Component 6: Commitment

Districts and schools must foster a deep sense of commitment to improve reading achievement. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines *commitment* as “an agreement or pledge to do something.” It is also defined as the “act of engaging oneself” and constitutes an “obligation.” Commitment is more than taking a verbal position. We must act decisively to deliver on our pledge. State, district, and school leaders must do whatever it takes to realize our goal of ensuring all students learn to read proficiently. This requires motivating the entire school community, including staff, board members, community volunteers, and parents; dedicating the necessary resources and time to get the job done; reporting data publicly; adhering to clear accountability

⁸ Haycock, 1998

⁹ Cohen & Hill, 2001

¹⁰ Torgesen, Houston, Rissman, & Kosanovich, 2007

measures; establishing and following problem-solving processes; and sharing the responsibility to implement a comprehensive, scientifically-based reading program so that all students will be successful.

Current Reading Skills of Indiana Students

In order to understand Indiana's present reading achievement, we look to data from the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) as well as data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

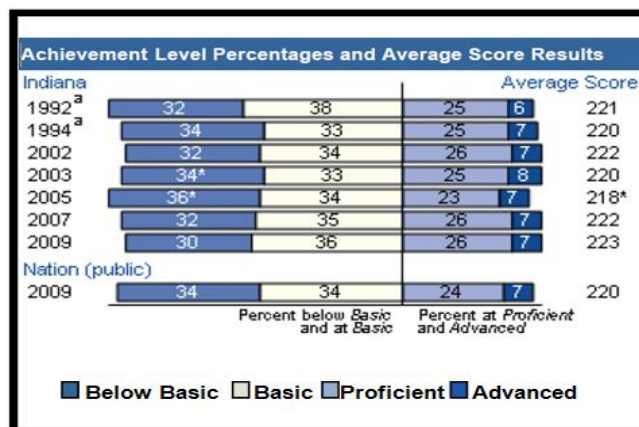
2010 ISTEP+ Results Overview				
English/Language Arts				
Grade	Passing Rate Percent (Total)*	Percent Pass +	Percent Not Passing	Undetermined
3	79	12	19	2
4	77	14	20	3
5	71	14	27	2
6	72	20	25	2
7	72	16	25	3
8	69	10	27	5
Average Pass Rate: 74 %				

The state has set an ambitious, yet feasible goal that 90% of students will pass the ISTEP+ exams at each grade level. Clearly, we have much work to do to reach this goal. In addition, the percentage of students achieving the highest passing designation, Pass +, is quite low. When the data is disaggregated into special populations, we see significant differences. Disparities exist between the achievement of white students and African American, Hispanic, and multiracial students. Furthermore, the gaps between English learners and native English speakers, and between special education and general education students, remain wide.

While no single national reading test presently exists in our schools, the closest measurement tool is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Each year, students from around the country participate in the NAEP state samples, and the results provide a scale with which Indiana's students can be compared to students outside of the state. Student scores are divided into four categories: *below basic*, *basic*, *proficient*, and *advanced*. Students who read

at grade level score proficient and advanced on the NAEP. The average scale score in Indiana for 4th graders was 223 on the 2009 NAEP reading assessment compared to 220 for the national public, while the percentage of Indiana students scoring at or above proficient at 4th grade was 33%, similar to the national performance. Sixty-six percent of Indiana's fourth grade students scored below proficient in 2009. By 8th grade, the average scale score was 266 as compared to the national score of 262, and the percentage scoring proficient, 32%, was not statistically significant when compared to the national profile. Indiana's scores place it roughly in the middle of all states in performance on the NAEP. Of the 50 states and other jurisdictions that participated in the 2009 4th grade assessment, Indiana's average scale score was higher than that in 21 states, not significantly different from that in 21 states, and lower than that in 9 states.¹¹

2009 Achievement Level Percentages and Average Score Results Indiana Grade 4



The data for disaggregated populations at grade 4 is even more problematic, with 49% of black and 50% of Hispanic students scoring below basic.

¹¹ The Nation's Report Card, 2007

Results for Student Groups in 2009					
Reporting Groups	Percent of students	Avg. score	Percentages at or above		Percent at Advanced
			Basic	Proficient	
Gender					
Male	51	218	65	29	6
Female	49	227	75	38	8
Race/Ethnicity					
White	77	227	75	38	9
Black	11	206	51	15	2
Hispanic	6	203	50	15	2
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	†	†	†	†
American Indian/Alaska Native	#	†	†	†	†
National School Lunch Program					
Eligible	44	210	57	20	2
Not eligible	56	232	80	45	11

Eighth grade data shows an even more challenging trend when disaggregated. Eighty-three percent of white 8th grade students scored at or above basic with 36% at or above proficient, compared to only 60% of black 8th grade students scoring at or above basic and 15% scoring at or above proficient. Hispanic students also performed significantly lower than white students.

Taken together, the ISTEP+ data and the NAEP data provide compelling evidence that we have more hard work ahead of us to prepare our students to be strong readers. To ensure our schools have the support to meet this challenge, the state, districts, and schools must all work together to equip educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need. By using what we know about the teaching of reading, along with early intervention, more students will be reading at or above grade-level by the time they reach 4th grade. We have the technology and measurement tools to be able to assess children as early as kindergarten in order to identify whether students are on a positive trajectory to becoming readers or whether they may need targeted intervention.

How to Use this Document

The State and District Guiding Principles serve as starting points for framing the roles and responsibilities of the SEA and the LEA. Each section that

follows provides guidance to implement the six components at the school level. Footnotes cite resources with a complete reference list at the end of each component. Endnotes appear at the end of each chapter to provide web resources and other supporting tools.

Beginning Stages

As a starting point, the district guiding principles serve as a strategic planning tool. For example, the establishment and use of a District Reading Leadership team is an important action required by the guiding principles. The school-level guiding principles define beliefs and actions schools must take to implement each of the six components essential to an effective school-wide reading program. The guiding principles found at the beginning of each component may be used to conduct an initial self-audit. This information can then be used to develop the school's reading plan or to review, evaluate, and revise one that already exists.